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Significant Nesting Records of Birds From Western Texas

Terry C. Maxwell

Department of Biology, Angelo State University,
San Angelo, Texas 76909

Texas is a vast geographic area. Understandably, our knowledge of bird distribution in Texas is due largely to the chance of where observers live (or have lived) and where attractive assemblages of rare or exotic species lure birders. Let a single Aztec Thrush or Wagler's Oriole wander into the Big Bend or a Yellow-nosed Albatross alight on the Gulf Coast and the ornithological community will likely know of the occurrence.

In-between these relatively well-studied areas are enormous expanses of terrain that are poorly known ornithologically. An example is the western portion of the Edwards Plateau and South Texas Plains, bounded roughly by Val Verde, Irion, McCulloch, San Saba, Frio and Webb counties. This region is approximately the size of West Virginia and is larger than 9 other states. Of the 28 included counties, bird checklists are currently available for 4 counties and 3 small parcels of state-managed land (Riskind 1980). Had the Ringed Kingfisher initiated its pioneering expansion into Texas in Webb, Maverick or Kinney County, we might not yet have been aware of the event.

Bird distribution in the region is a tantalizing problem. Situated astride the 100th meridian, eastern, western and southern birds intermingle in islands and corridors of diverse avian habitats. With the Tamaulipan, Chihuahuan and Balconian biotic provinces (and to a lesser extent the Kansan province) meeting, many bird species should be at the margins of their distributions. Annual and longer period climatic fluctuations and changing vegetation patterns should cause frequent extensions and retreats of species distributions.

I present here distributionally interesting nesting records for 8 species (some previously unreported) along the western margin of this region. These records were obtained largely incidental to other investigations, which leaves unknown the consistency or geographic extent of breeding by these species in this region. Specimens are deposited in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections (TCWC), and photographs are deposited in the Texas Photo-Record File (TPRF); both collections are at Texas A&M University. Several of the records were obtained while I was conducting field research supported by the Tom Slick Foundation, Texas A&M University.

Aix sponsa, Wood Duck.—Oberholser (1974) placed the western limits of nesting Wood Ducks in the Edwards Plateau in Kerr County, although north of the plateau there are records for Randall, Baylor and Young counties. Bellrose (1976) and Palmer (1976) placed the western limits considerably to the east. Observers in the Concho Valley (primarily Concho, Tom Green and Irion counties) have known the species to be present year-round for at least the past 2 decades but were unable to confirm nesting. On 26 May 1979, I visited the site of a reported Wood Duck nest in a residential area of Christoval, Tom Green County and found

a clutch of 8 eggs in a natural cavity, 3.4 m above ground in a live oak (*Quercus fusiformis*) (TPRF nos. 179 a and b). The nest tree was about 65 m south of an inhabited trailer house and within 15 m of a vegetable garden that was tended daily. One punctured egg was on the ground, and during my stay a Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) flew to the nest and pecked at the eggs. This extends the known breeding distribution in the Edwards Plateau about 150 km northwest of Kerr County.

Buteo lineatus, Red-shouldered Hawk.—This woodland hawk has apparently declined in both population level and breeding distribution throughout the United States (Brown 1971, Oberholser 1974) and is included on the American Birds 1980 Blue List of declining species (Arbib 1979). Lloyd (1887) collected eggs of this species in Tom Green County in 1882, and he considered it to be a rare but regular breeding resident. Oberholser (1974) suggested that the species might not breed presently at its historical western limits in Texas. In view of the general concern for this hawk, I give the following records as confirmation of its continued breeding in west-central Texas. Since 1964, I have seen pairs in summer in riparian woodlands of live oak and pecan (*Carya illinoiensis*) at the heads of Spring Creek and Dove Creek in Irion County and Pecan Creek and the South Concho River in Tom Green County. On 12 June 1977, I found a nest placed about 12 m above ground in a live oak near the head of the South Concho River. An adult and one flying juvenile were in the vicinity. On 28 April 1978, the same nest contained an incubating adult and I found a second nest in a pecan, 1.6 km to the north. An adult Red-shouldered Hawk was also incubating the second nest.

Crotophaga sulcirostris, Groove-billed Ani.—Numerous accounts in American Birds in recent years have documented the remarkable wanderings of this species. Most reports have been of the extralimital northern wanderings in the nonbreeding season, primarily Fall. Wauer (1968) reviewed the species' status in Texas and reported the first documented record for the Trans Pecos. At the time of his report, Groove-billed Anis were known to nest, in the United States, only in the lower Rio Grande Valley and up the coast in Nueces County. Wauer (1973) reported a nesting attempt along the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park in July 1969. As of 1974, nesting records were known from Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, Zapata, Brooks, Jimm Hogg, McMullen, Nueces and Jimm Wells counties in south Texas, Brewster County in west Texas, and Jefferson County in southeast Texas (Oberholser 1974, Webster 1967a, 1967b, 1973, 1974). Groove-billed Anis were found nesting in coastal Louisiana in July 1971 (Lowery 1974). Discoveries of new nesting locations continued in Texas with reports from Kenedy County in 1976 (Webster 1976), Bee County in 1978 (Webster 1978), and Val Verde County in 1974 (near Langtry, fide C. C. Wiedenfeld) and 1978 (Webster 1978). I report 2 nesting records from west-central Texas, the northernmost interior locations in North America. In the summer of 1967, local observers (C. C. and Iris Wiedenfeld, G. C. Creel and Randy Harkey, pers. comm.) at San Angelo, Tom Green County, found 2 nests of Groove-billed Anis. One nest each was on the shores of O. C. Fisher Reservoir and Lake Nasworthy. No details on nest success are known. On 19 July 1979, Al Flury showed me a nest of this species along the shore of Twin Buttes Reservoir, also in Tom Green County. I visited the site several times in late July and early August. Eggs were incubated for at least the week following 19 July (TPRF nos. 178 a and b), but fledglings were not

seen and the success of the nesting attempt is unknown. Despite the increase in nonbreeding season records north of the traditional range, recent sporadic nesting attempts in arid western Texas (Brewster, Val Verde and Tom Green counties) may represent increased coverage of a normal, if irregular, event. Lloyd (1887) reported this species in Tom Green County in October 1885 and 1886.

Aeronautes saxatalis, White-throated Swift.—This swift has been recorded as certainly nesting in Texas on Emory Peak in the Chisos Mountains and Santa Elena Canyon in Brewster County, Guadalupe Mountains in Culberson County, and Franklin Mountains in El Paso County (Oberholser 1974). Summer specimens are known from the Davis Mountains in Jeff Davis County (Oberholser 1974), and James Scudday (pers. comm.) recorded them apparently nesting in crevices near the summit of Sawtooth Mountain in June 1969. Scudday (1976) also found them in the Solitario uplift, Presidio and Brewster counties, in June 1975. While surveying the bird fauna of Seminole Canyon State Historical Park, Val Verde County, I discovered a nesting colony of these swifts on 20 May 1979. The park is located 13 km west of Comstock and 4.8 km east of the Pecos River. A small group of 4 or 5 swifts were flying about a vertical cliff face near the mouth of the canyon above Lake Amistad. I could not locate nesting cavities, if there were any in the cliff. Another, more accessible group, was nesting in a rock shelter or overhang (Fig. 1) near the head of the canyon within sight of U.S. Hiway 90. I estimated the rock shelter group at about 15 pairs. The nest holes were solution cavities beneath the upper, horizontal lip of the limestone shelter. Swifts were active at the nest holes on 11 June and remained at the canyon with decreasing shelter area activity, until at least 20 October. I saw none during a trip in late December. At an elevation of 397 m, this site is 335 m lower than the previously reported lowest elevation limit in Texas (Oberholser 1974). The location is 230 km east of Emory Peak in the Chisos Mountains and is the first nesting location east of the montane Trans Pecos.

Empidonax virescens, Acadian Flycatcher.—This flycatcher is believed to be largely confined as a migrant and breeder to floodplain woodlands east of the 100th meridian (Oberholser 1974), although it has rarely occurred as a migrant west to Tom Green County (Maxwell 1979a). Dan McClung, Ismael Nava and I discovered an active nest of this species on 9 July 1977 near the head of the South Concho River. The nest was well concealed in leaves of a burr oak (*Q. macrocarpa*) limb about 4 m above a small stream. At least 2 nearly-fledged young were in the nest. Due to the confusing similarity of *Empidonax* species, I collected the adult male there on 12 July (TCWC 10306). Although collected in summer in Val Verde County, this is the first confirmed nesting west of Kerr County. There are additional summer sightings of singing males in the Concho Valley area, indicating the likelihood of regular, if rare, nesting.

Vireo flavifrons, Yellow-throated Vireo.—I (Maxwell 1979b) recently reported sight records of singing males (in 1977) and 2 unsuccessful nesting attempts (in 1970, fide C. C. Wiedenfeld) of this species in southern Tom Green County. The following additional record confirms successful nesting of this eastern, deciduous forest nesting vireo in the northwest Edwards Plateau. On 9 April 1978, Dan McClung and I found a singing male in mature floodplain forest near the head of the South Concho River. On 29 April, we returned to the site and found a nest

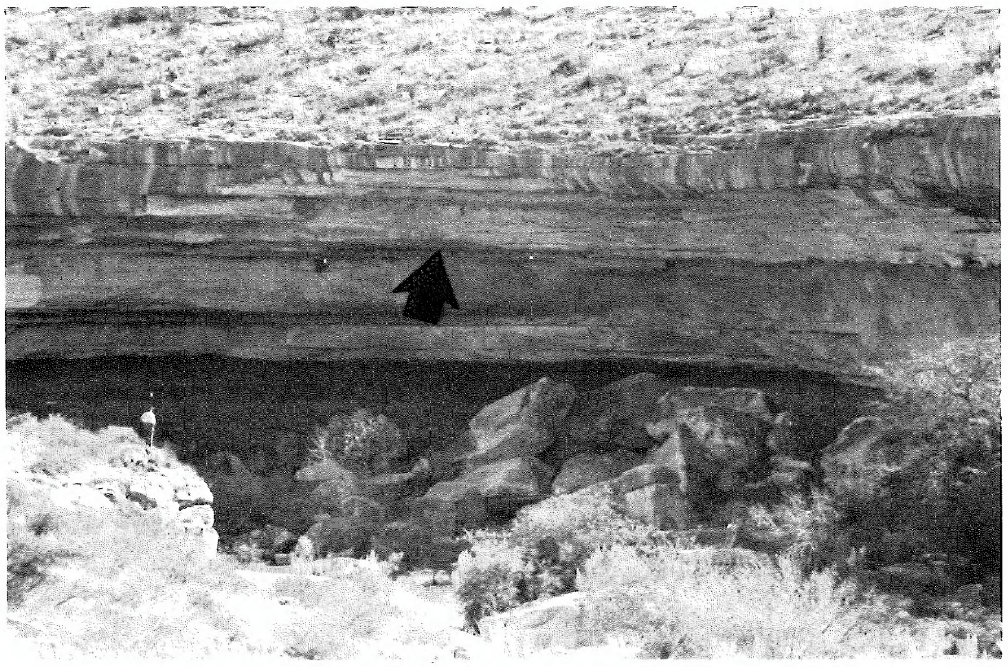

Fig. 1. Limestone shelter nesting site of White-throated Swifts (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) in Seminole Canyon State Historical Park, Val Verde County, Texas. Arrow points to underside of lip where solution cavities provided nesting holes. Photographed on 30 December 1979 by David Roeder.

placed about 9 m above ground in a burr oak. For 30 minutes we watched both adults carry caterpillars to the nestlings.

Quiscalus mexicanus, Great-tailed Grackle.—Kincaid (in Oberholser 1974) documented the expansion of breeding distribution by this grackle in Texas up to the early 1970's. Continued expansion is documented annually by Williams in the Southern Great Plains regional reports of American Birds. West-central Texas was colonized later than was expected, considering the species' history in the state. The first observation of more than single Great-tailed Grackles in the Concho Valley was approximately 100 seen at Lake Nasworthy, Tom Green County, in December 1976. I found 15 nests with eggs there on 14 May 1977 and the first nesting record for Midland, Midland County, 165 km to the west, was also obtained in 1977 (Williams 1977). Nesting occurred again at Lake Nasworthy in 1978 and 1979. All nests found at Lake Nasworthy have been over water in stands of cattail (*Typha* sp.) and rush (*Scirpus* sp.). An adult female (TCWC 10342) collected on 5 March 1977 is of the race *Q. m. prosopidicola,* indicating a probable expansion from the east or southeast, rather than from the southwest by *Q. m. monsoni.*

Spizella pusilla, Field Sparrow.—Field Sparrows reportedly nest fairly commonly on the eastern half of the Edwards Plateau (Oberholser 1974). West of the 100th meridian, they were first found nesting in Schleicher County on 5 May 1975 (Williams 1975). In the early summers of 1976 and 1977, I found small populations of this sparrow in Irion and Tom Green counties. A population of 19 birds/40 hectares in 1976 and 16 birds/40 hectares in 1977 was censused in floodplain

mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) woodland south of Water Valley, Tom Green County. I saw 2 adults feeding recently-fledged juveniles at this site on 4 June 1977. Continued nesting is indicated by the presence of 2 territorial males on a juniper (*Juniperus pinchotii*)-mesquite site in northern Irion County on 28 and 30 May 1980.

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Bird Casualties and Sightings on an Offshore Oil Rig in the Gulf of Mexico

Warren M. Pulich and Thomas B. Dellinger

Department Biology, University of Dallas, Irving, Texas 75061, and
P.O. Box 163, Duncanville, Texas 75116

It has been well documented (Bullis, Jr. 1954, Auk 71:298–305; Bullis, Jr. and Lincoln 1952, Auk 69:34–39; Lowery, Jr. 1945, Wilson Bull. 57:92–121; Lowery, Jr. 1946, Auk 63:175–210; Stevenson 1952, Wilson Bull. 69:39–77) that in migration land birds fly over the Gulf of Mexico. The presence of offshore oil drilling rigs in the gulf offers possibilities for avian observations and studies of trans-gulf migration if ornithological observers were stationed on some of these rigs in spring and fall. To date most of the observations have been incidental to the rigs' primary purpose, i.e. oil exploration by persons with some knowledge of birds but whose duties permit only limited observations.

Another point in fact is the dearth of weather data at the observation site. Ideally weather data from the rig in question would complement the migration studies. Although our data tend to fall short in this catagory, we should like to present our findings of some trans-gulf sightings at one of these structures in the Gulf of Mexico, since so few observations have been reported from offshore rigs.

The junior author in conjunction with his engineering duties for his oil company spent two periods totaling about 25 days of the 1979 spring migration period on an offshore drilling rig, situated approximately 64 km (40 miles) southeast of Cameron, Louisiana, at position 29°30′N latitude, 92°56′W longitude. Specifically, the oil rig is located in the Gulf of Mexico on the outer Continental Shelf G-1477, East Cameron, Block 81. The rig proper is a jack-up type with the main platform about 12 m above water. It consists of a heliport platform, loading and unloading structures and other support facilities. The highest super-structure is a tower projecting 67 m above the water. The platform rig is well lighted and offers many sites upon which land birds may put down. There are 74 other rigs or platforms within binocular sight on a clear day.

Dellinger's first tour of duty on the rig comprised seven days stay from 19 April to 25 April 1979. His job permitted him some time for the following observations.

Although gulls and terns were seen frequently, the first land birds were not observed until Friday night, 20 April 1979. At that time he was walking near the heliport structure when he heard birds calling from beneath the structure, which is located at one end of the rig, and is well protected and lighted. During both tours Dellinger noted the greatest concentration of about a hundred birds of a number of species at this time. A weather front (rain) which moved from northwest to southeast apparently had already reached the rig before Dellinger had arrived as it had rained hard on the Louisiana coast the night of 18 April, before he flew out to the rig on the morning of 19 April. Thus the birds in question apparently set down after the front had passed, although Dellinger may have been so busy upon his arrival that he may have missed the birds. However, Dellinger

Table 1. Specimens collected from oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, Southeast of Cameron, Louisiana.

Species	Date	
	19–25 April 1979	22May–8 June 1979
Acadian Flycatcher (*Empidonax virescens*)	1 F*	
Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)	1 M	
Wood Thrush (*Hylocichla mustelina*)		1
Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)		1
White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)	1 F	
Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)	1 M, (2) = 3	1
Black-and-White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)	(2)	3 M, 1 = 4
Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)	1 F	
Worm-eating Warbler (*Helmitheros vermivorus*)		1
Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*)	1 F	(3)
Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*)	1 M	1 M
Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*)		2 M
Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)		1 M
Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*)		1 M
Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*)	(1)	2
Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*)	1 M	1
Kentucky Warbler (*Oporornis formosus*)	1 F?, (1) = 2	
Common Yellowthroat (*Geothypis trichas*)	1 F	4 M, 1 F = 5
Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*)		1 M
Northern Oriole (*Icterus g. galbula*)	(1)	
Summer Tanager (*Piranga rubra*)	1 M	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)	(1)	
Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*)	2 M, 1 F, (2) = 5	3 M
TOTALS	24	28

* ( ) = not saved, F = female, M = male.

felt sure that he would have noticed had any birds been present during the day on the 19th and 20th.

Unfortunately, engineering duties at the time and a lack of binoculars on the first tour precluded detailed observations. As best as can be determined most of the birds set down on the rig on 20 April and only a few live birds remained on the rig after 23 April. By the time Dellinger left the rig on the morning of 25 April all birds had either left the platform or had expired.

A number of birds were seen alive during the tours of duty and tentatively identified, but some of these were subsequently found dead on the rig. One of the most abundant species was the Indigo Bunting—at least 40 were estimated on the rig. Some birds were seen only fleetingly or could not be identified. Other birds found dead and collected were mainly parulids. Table 1 lists the species collected. These were identified by Pulich and are now deposited in the bird collection at the University of Dallas in Irving, Texas.

Some additional notes concerning the bird observations are given as follows:

Several Cattle Egrets visited the rig but most left within a few hours. One group of four stayed on the rig about three days, flying and walking about, avoiding people, and looking for food. These birds were observed drinking sea water (used to wash down the rig) from small puddles. All these birds weakened, and two were later seen floating in the water below the rig. Apparently all four expired

and dropped into the water, after being unable to maintain altitude in flying around the rig to avoid the crew. Another group of three egrets visited the rig for only a few minutes and then flew off low over the water to the northwest. One crew member captured a Cattle Egret while Dellinger was on the rig, but it was not learned what happened to this bird. Dried remains of three Cattle Egrets were found on a production platform located 900 m south of the rig.

Two live Gray Catbirds were seen. One injured catbird was caught on the heliport deck and was placed in a safe location, but it was not there the following morning. However, a dead catbird was subsequently found and collected.

A live Rose-breasted Grosbeak was seen about the rig for two days, but later it too was found dead and collected.

Birds were also observed flitting about on the work boat offloading material onto the rig. These included a Sora, two small sandpipers (peeps), two swallows (believed to be Barn Swallows, but not positively identified) and a male Northern Oriole (Baltimore). A Black-and-white Warbler was noted feeding on algae near the boat's waterline. A small unidentified gray bird came in low over the water from under the rig, but failing to reach the height of the boat rail it crashed into the side of the boat to fall into the water and was unable to save itself.

One member of the rig crew caught and brought a Purple Gallinule to Dellinger who released it after it rested.

Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos were seen around the rig, but they remained active and disappeared. An unidentified thrush flushed from the rig and flew off to the northwest.

Dellinger was notified upon his return trip that a large group of birds was seen on the rig on the evening of 25 April, the day he departed. Someone later mentioned that a crew member caged and fed some of the "prettier little birds" but they all died. Several persons told stories indicating that land birds on the rig are not uncommon.

Dellinger's second tour of duty lasted from 22 May to 8 June 1979. However, no land bird sightings (dead or alive) were made after 3 June. Upon his arrival around noon, he saw no live birds on the rig, although he picked up several small dead birds that day. The weather was rainy on the arrival day.

The weather was clear and mild on 23 May. A nighthawk was glimpsed as it flew up from under the heliport deck and away to another part of the rig. Two small live birds, thought to be a Solitary Vireo and a Magnolia Warbler, were also spotted among the rig's equipment. Many gulls were observed flying around the offshore rig on this date. In addition, numerous dragonflies of at least two species were noted.

Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos and a parulid were sighted flying around the deck of the structure on 24 May. They were not seen the following day, but it could not be determined what had happened to them.

The only bird observed on 25 May was a nondescript warbler which was sighted while Dellinger visited a nearby rig for a short period of time.

On 26 May a lone Great Egret was observed on the rig. In the early evening (1830) three Cattle Egrets were seen flying from the south in a northerly direction about 6 m above the surface of the water. None of these birds landed.

On 27 May a bird thought to be a Tennessee Warbler was sighted, and one was found dead the following day.

Table 2. Bird sightings from oil rig in Gulf of Mexico, southeast of Cameron, Louisiana.

Species	Date	
	19–25 April 1979	22 May–8 June 1979
Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*)		1
Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)	12	4
Sora (*Porzana carolina*)	1	
Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrula martinica*)	1	
Sandpiper—"Peeps"	2	
Gull sp. (*Larus* sp.)	X	X
Tern sp. (*Sterna* sp.)	X	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)	2	2
Chuck-will's-widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*)		1
Nighthawk sp. (*Chordeiles* sp.)		1
Swallow sp. (possibly *Hirundo rustica*)	2	
Thrush sp.	1	
Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*)		1

X = no estimate numbers.

A caprimulgid was spotted perching on the rig's helideck at 1630 on 28 May, and after careful examination it was identified as a Chuck-will's-widow. This bird flew strongly about the rig for several hours, but it was gone the following day.

A bird thought to be a Gray Catbird was glimpsed briefly on 29 May, a rainy day. The bird flew up to the derrick, perched for a short time, and then took off circling and flying westward.

On 31 May a small warbler-like bird was spotted on the work boat below the rig's structure, and a lone Cattle Egret was also sighted on the work boat on 3 June, the last day of any land bird observations.

Table 1 also gives a summary of specimens picked up by Dellinger during his second period of duty on the offshore oil rig. Table 2 shows the sightings of birds not collected both duty periods.

In summary, 23 species are represented by actual specimens collected from the offshore oil rig. Parulids (13 species) represented 56 percent of the species found dead on the rig. Careful evaluation of the junior author's sightings added at least 13 more species of birds. Thus, no less than a total of 36 species of birds stopped over, or passed by the rig during the two periods of observations at the offshore oil structure.

Additional Inland Nesting Records in Texas of Four Species of Colonial Waterbirds

Raymond C. Telfair II

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843

During my study of the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) in Texas, 1971–1976, I established and documented inland nesting records with photographs, of four species of colonial waterbirds (Fig. 1): Olivaceous Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax olivaceus*), Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), and White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*). Anhingas nest primarily in inland swamps of East Texas, whereas the other three species nest primarily along the coast, although there are records from inland counties (Blacklock et al. 1978, Manry et al. 1976, Oberholser 1974, Taylor and Michael 1971, and Zinn 1977).

In 1974 and 1975, 4 and 10 pairs of Olivaceous Cormorants, respectively, nested in "The Slough" heronry at the Beaver Catfish Hunting and Fishing Club (NW Anderson Co., convergence of Beaver and Catfish creeks of the Trinity River System, about 4 km S of the Gus Engeling Wildlife Management Area, coordinates: 31°52′N, 95°53′W). In 1976, there was a drastic decline (97% reduction), in the number of nesting birds in the heronry apparently due to the dead condition of most of the nest-site vegetation. No cormorants nested there, but 10 pairs apparently moved northward with the majority of other species and nested in the Gum Pond heronry on the Engeling Wildlife Management Area, where seven pairs nested in 1975. In 1976, at least two pairs of Olivaceous Cormorants nested on Bird Island, Cedar Creek Reservoir (NW Henderson Co., Cedar Creek of the Trinity River System, coordinates: 32°20′N, 96°10′W). Other counties from which inland nest sites of Olivaceous Cormorants have been reported are Zapata, Brooks, Victoria, Colorado, and Travis (Oberholser 1974); Clay (Zinn 1977); and Sabine (Blacklock et al. 1978).

From 1971–1976, Anhingas nested at the Engeling Wildlife Management Area (Anderson Co.); in 1971, they nested in the Gum Pond heronry; and in 1972 and 1973, they were the only birds that nested there, about 25 pairs both years. In 1974, no species nested in Gum Pond, but in 1975 and 1976, Anhingas returned and nested in association with Olivaceous Cormorants, herons and egrets, and White Ibis. In 1976, 15 pairs of Anhingas nested among a large number of herons and egrets that established a new heronry in the McDonald Swamp bordering Catfish Creek about 3.2 km south of the Scarborough Swamp, both areas within the Engeling Wildlife Management Area.

On 21 August 1975, Mr. David Rideout, Biologist of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, found Anhingas nesting in a small heronry in Sweet Lakes Slough about 6.4 km WSW of North Zulch (WC Madison Co., coordinates: 30°54′N, 96°11′W). On 28 August 1975 Mr. David Rideout and I located six active nests of Anhingas (each containing full fresh clutches) in a pure stand of Black Willows (*Salix niger*), in the Moelhman Slough, an oxbow lake in the Brazos River System about 8 km ENE of Cooks Point (Burleson Co., coordinates:

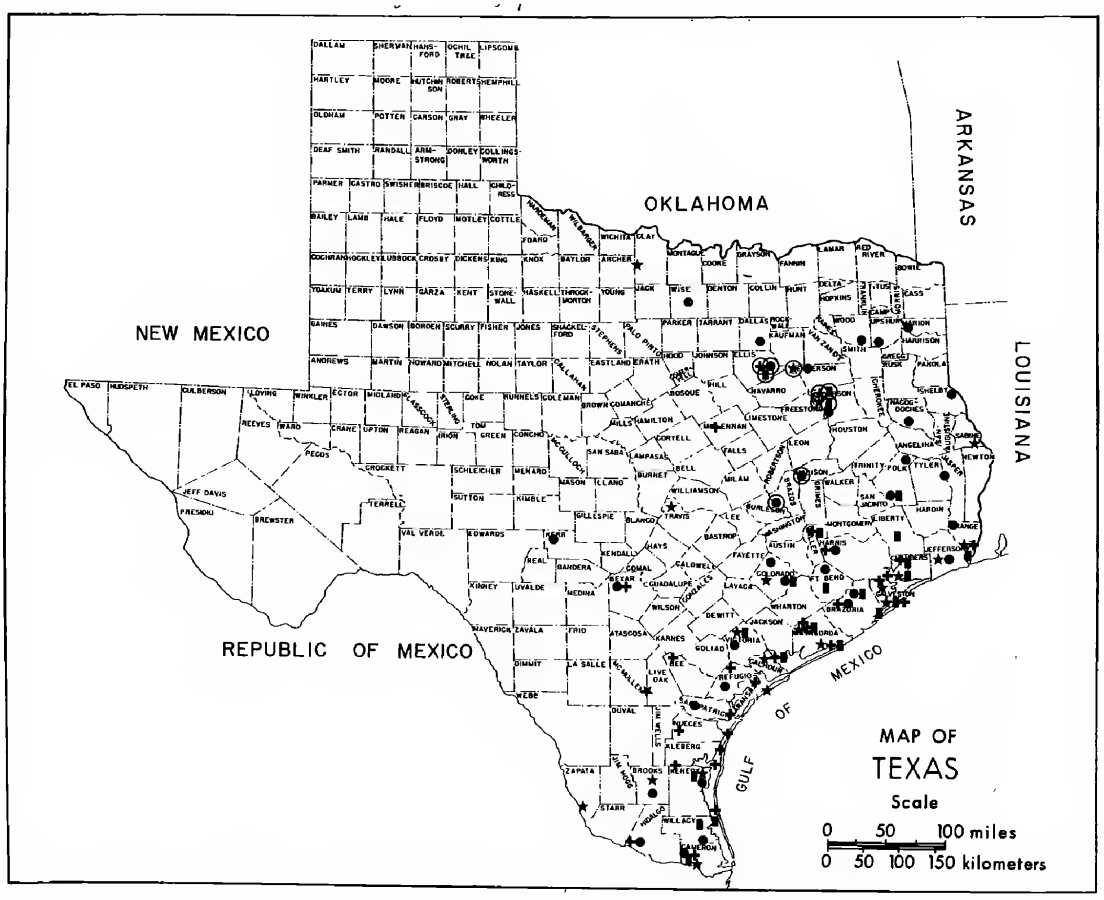

Fig. 1. Location of nesting sites. Symbols without circles are locations from the literature. Circled symbols are new records. Symbols are: stars (Olivaceous Cormorants), dots (Anhingas), crosses (White-faced Ibises), and rectangles (White Ibises). Literature data are from Blacklock et al. (1978), Manry et al. (1976), Oberholser (1974), Taylor and Michael (1971), and Zinn (1977).

30°57′N, 96°23′W). On 15–19 June 1976, Mr. John C. Smith, Biologist of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and I saw a pair of Anhingas in the Ennis heronry (SE Ellis Co., Cottonwood Creek of the Trinity River System, east end of Gilmer Street, coordinates: 32°20′N, 96°37′W). No nest was found, but the pair exhibited territorial behavior. Other inland nesting sites have been in Orange, Harris, Fort Bend, Colorado, Victoria, Brooks, Hidalgo, Wise, Dallas, Marion, Bexar, and possibly Kerr counties (Oberholser 1974); and, also, in Polk, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Shelby, Upshur, and Wood counties (Blacklock et al. 1978).

During each year from 1971–1976, one to 30 pairs of White Ibis nested in "The Slough" heronry at the Beaver Catfish Hunting and Fishing Club. Also, in the Gum Pond heronry, they nested in 1971 (exact numbers unknown, but three large chicks were banded) and at least one pair nested there in 1975. In the Ennis heronry, in 1973, a pair of these birds nested and fledged three chicks. Other counties from which inland nest sites have been reported are Liberty, Fort Bend, Victoria, and perhaps Waller (Oberholser 1974); also, Polk (Manry et al. 1976) and Colorado (Blacklock et al. 1978).

In 1975, 2 pairs of White-faced Ibis nested in the Ennis heronry and at least

five chicks were fledged. Inland nesting sites have also been reported in Hidalgo, Bee, Bexar, McLennan, and perhaps Waller counties (Oberholser 1974); and Harris (Blacklock et al. 1978).

Although Oberholser stated that White Ibis perhaps nested in Waller County and that the White-faced Ibis may have nested there in recent years, their nesting in the county was confirmed (pers. comm.) by Dr. J. R. Dixon (Professor of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University) who observed both species nesting there in a mott of Post Oaks (*Quercus stellata*) from 1959 to 1961.

In conclusion, by perhaps serving as "beacons" via being conspicuous, noisy, and socially stimulating or facilitating, heronries containing Cattle Egrets may be attracting several native species to inland heronries in which the latter species have not nested previously: 1) Olivaceous Cormorants, 2) Anhingas, 3) White-faced Ibises, 4) White Ibises, and 5) Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*) (Runnels 1980). Furthermore, recent creation of additional feeding areas, viz., cattle "tanks" (cattle watering ponds) and reservoirs of various types in inland Texas may, via these Cattle Egret "beacons," increase the breeding range of these five native species that have been or are primarily or totally coastal nesters. Also, large heronries containing conspicuous, noisy Cattle Egrets may serve as deterents to predators, thus being a major factor leading to their attraction to native species.

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Author's note: The Olivaceous Cormorant breeding record in McMullen County is in error (Fig. 1).

A Survey of the Avifauna of the Beaumont Unit, Big Thicket National Preserve

Jed J. Ramsey

Department of Biology, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas 77710

The Big Thicket National Preserve is located in seven counties of southeastern Texas: Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Orange, Polk, and Tyler (Fig. 1). It is an area of diverse plant communities ranging from swampy areas of lush growth and stream sides to dryer upland areas. The preserve has been relatively undisturbed, but some areas have been devastated, and will not recover for decades (e.g., a 20 ha tract in the middle of Big Sandy Unit in Polk County was clear cut before the land was acquired for the preserve).

The main body of the Beaumont Unit is located in southeastern Hardin County. Small areas are included adjacent to the main body of the unit in Orange and Jefferson counties (Fig. 1). The main body of the unit (about 2,500 ha) is surrounded by water, the Neches River on the east, Pine Island Bayou on the south, and a man-made canal (the Lower Neches Valley Authority Canal) connecting these two. The area is low in elevation and much of it is swampy most of the year. Part of the area has apparently never been logged, and the entire area has some of the finest stands of lowland hardwoods to be found anywhere. Although located on the outskirts of Beaumont, a city of 125,000, this unit is quite isolated because of the watery boundary.

General works concerning the birds of Texas are helpful when considering this particular area, but published accounts of the birds of the Big Thicket in general and of the Beaumont Unit specifically are few. Parks and Cory (1938) listed birds found in the Big Thicket area, but admitted that this list was "built" upon the work of J. K. Strecker (1912). Fisher (1974) reported a survey of avifauna of the Big Thicket which included the Beaumont Unit. However, with the development of all these areas in the preserve, detailed descriptions of the flora and fauna of each area are needed. This will not only allow better enjoyment of the area, but will also aid in its proper management.

During the Fall and Winter of 1975, and the Spring of 1976, weekly walking surveys were made over previously established routes in the Beaumont Unit. Data collection began 6 October 1975 and ended 31 June 1976. During migration periods, two or three surveys were made per week. An attempt was made to record all species in the area of the census route and the numbers of each species encountered. Although some birds were recorded by song or call, most were identified by sight. The surveys were performed from approximately sunrise to about 1000 hr.

A total of 58 species of birds was observed representing 26 families (Table 1). Of the 58 species, 27 may be found here all year, 9 are to be found here only in the winter, 12 are summer residents, 5 are migrants, 4 are migrants and probable summer residents, and 1 is a winter bird which also migrates through the Big Thicket Preserve (Table 2).

Table 1. A list of the species observed with dates of observation and number observed (date/number).

Species	1975			1976					
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*						21/1			
Green Heron *Butorides striatus virescens*							22/1		
Little Blue Heron *Florida caerulea*							3/1		
Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*							15/1		
Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*							1/1		
Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*					10/10 14/6 17/7	21/5	3/2 6/2		
Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*						16/1			
Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*					14/1 24/2				
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*				27/1					
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*								19/3 26/2	9/3 23/1
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*							27/2	4/1	
Chuck-will's-widow *Caprimulgus carolinensis*								4/1	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird *Archilochus colubris*							3/1		
Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon*						16/1 21/1			
Common Flicker *Colaptes auratus auratus*			1/1						
Pileated Woodpecker *Dryocopus pileatus*					3/1 14/2 17/1 24/1		3/3 15/1	4/2	
Red-bellied Woodpecker *Melanerpes carolinus*					3/2 14/2 17/1	21/1	3/3 6/1 27/1	4/3	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*					3/1				
Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*								4/1	
Eastern Phoebe *Sayornis phoebe*			1/1	27/1	3/1	16/1			
Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virescens*								4/1	

Table 1. Continued.

Species	1975			1976					
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens*								4/1	
Blue Jay *Cyanocitta cristata*	4/1		1/1	27/12	3/1 10/1 14/1 17/3 24/5	21/1	3/3 6/1	4/2	
Common Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*					17/2				
Fish Crow *Corvus ossifragus*				27/1		16/1	6/1	4/1	
Carolina Chickadee *Parus carolinensis*			1/4	27/25	3/7 10/2 14/8 17/3 24/3	21/3	3/7 6/2 10/15 27/5	4/5	
Tufted Titmouse *Parus bicolor*			1/1		3/5 10/1 14/7 17/2 24/2	16/1 21/1	3/2 15/1	4/2	
Brown Creeper *Certhia familiaris*					3/1				
Winter Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*		10/1							
Carolina Wren *Thryothorus ludovicianus*			1/1	27/1	3/2 14/2 24/3	16/1 21/3	3/5 6/1 15/2 27/2	4/2	
Gray Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis*							27/1	4/1	
Brown Thrasher *Toxostoma rufum*					10/3 14/1				
American Robin *Turdus migratorius*				27/1	3/12 10/4 14/12 17/6 24/7	16/2 21/1	3/7 6/2		
Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*				27/2	3/2 14/1				
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Polioptila caerulea*			1/1		3/1 10/1		3/1 6/1 15/1 27/3	4/3	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*		3/1	1/1	27/2	3/1	16/2			
Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*			1/3		3/2				
White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*					24/2	16/1 21/1	3/15 6/3 15/2 27/5	4/7	

Table 1. Continued.

Species	1975 Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1976 Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*						21/1			
Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*							22/3		
Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*							3/7 15/4	4/1	
Northern Parula *Parula americana*						21/1	3/17 6/12 15/6 27/2	4/1	
Yellow Warbler *Dendroica petechia*								4/1	
Magnolia Warbler *Dendroica magnolia*								4/5	
Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata coronata*				27/2	3/1 10/4 14/5 17/4	16/7			
Chestnut-sided Warbler *Dendroica pensylvanica*								4/3	
Bay-breasted Warbler *Dendroica castanea*								4/15	
Kentucky Warbler *Oporonis formosus*						16/1			
Hooded Warbler *Wilsonia citrina*							3/2 15/5		
Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis*								4/1	
Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus*			1/45		3/4 10/18 24/2	16/20	3/5		
Brown-headed Cowbird *Molothrus ater*			1/8		3/4				
Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*								4/1	
Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*			1/5	27/12	3/14 10/4 14/12 17/3 24/7	16/3 21/3	3/5 6/2 15/8 27/2	4/7	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*							27/3		
American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*					14/1	21/2			
White-throated Sparrow *Zonotrichia albicollis*			1/12		3/4 10/3 14/13 17/6 24/3		6/3		
Fox Sparrow *Passerella iliaca*				27/1					

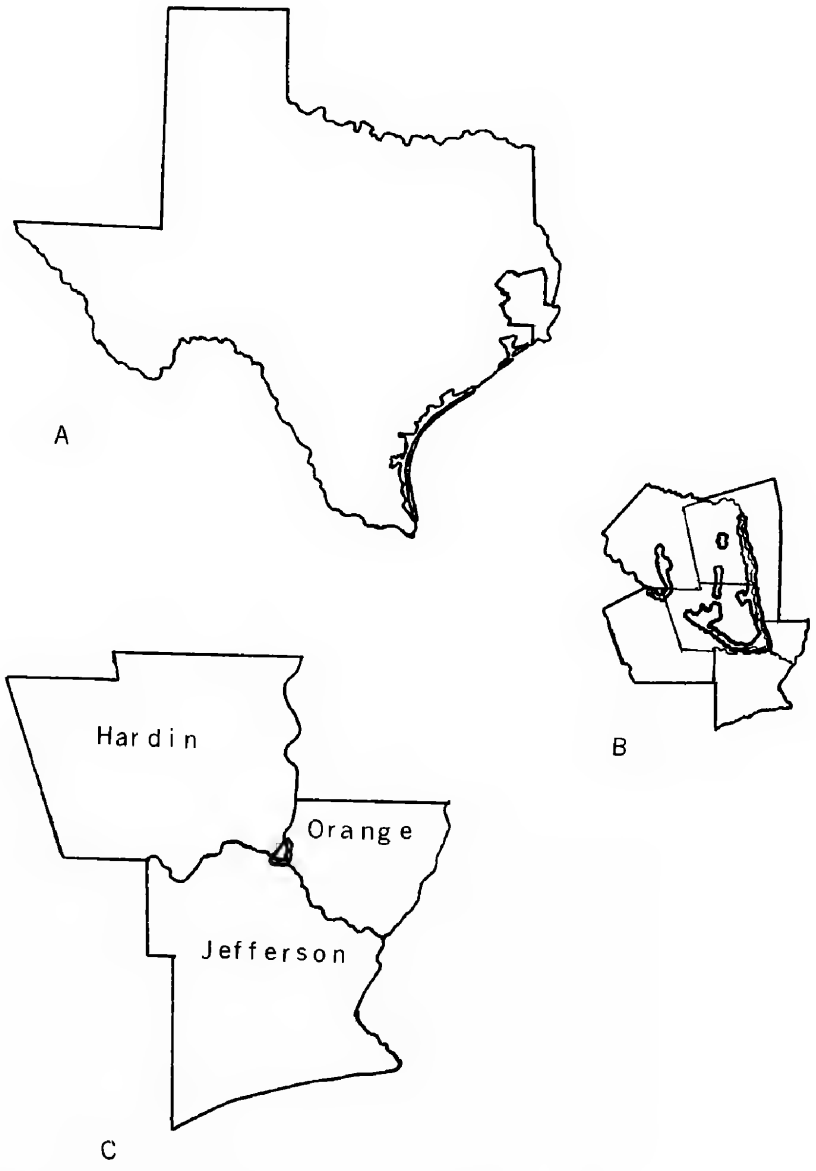

Fig. 1. The location of the Beaumont Unit of the Big Thicket. A.—The state of Texas with the area of the seven counties containing the Big Thicket National Preserve outlined. B.—The seven counties with the approximate area of the Big Thicket National Preserve indicated. C.—The three counties in which the Beaumont Unit is located. The area of this study is shown where the three counties come together.

Hopefully, these data may serve as a basis for further studies. The Big Thicket Preserve is in the process of establishment and development. Descriptions of the flora and fauna of the various areas are needed not only for better enjoyment of the preserve, but also for its proper management.

Table 2. A list of species observed classified by period of residence.

YEAR ROUND	WINTER
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Little Blue Heron	Brown Creeper
Snowy Egret	Winter Wren
Yellow-crowned Night Heron	Hermit Thrush
Wood Duck	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Red-shouldered Hawk	American Goldfinch
Mourning Dove	White-throated Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	Fox Sparrow
Common Flicker	
Pileated Woodpecker	SUMMER
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Green Heron
Eastern Phoebe	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Blue Jay	Chuck-will's-widow
Common Crow	Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Fish Crow	Great Crested Flycatcher
Carolina Chickadee	Acadian Flycatcher
Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Wood Pewee
Carolina Wren	Yellow-throated Vireo
Gray Catbird	Prothonotary Warbler
Brown Thrasher	Northern Parula
American Robin	Kentucky Warbler
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Summer Tanager
Starling	
Red-winged Blackbird	MIGRANTS
Brown-headed Cowbird	Ruddy Turnstone (also winter)
Cardinal	White-eyed Vireo (also summer)
	Black-and-white Warbler (also summer)
	Yellow Warbler (also summer)
	Magnolia Warbler
	Chestnut-sided Warbler
	Bay-breasted Warbler
	Hooded Warbler (also summer)
	Canada Warbler
	Rose-breasted Grosbeak

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Roadside Raptor Count in Eastern Texas

Keith L. Bildstein[1] and Thomas C. Grubb, Jr.

Department of Zoology, The Ohio State University,
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Automobile censuses of wintering raptors show considerable variation in the number of birds seen, both with respect to geographical location and year (Table 1). In this note we report the results of a 1,464-km survey of raptors in eastern Texas and compare our results with those earlier studies.

On 9 December 1977 we traveled from Denison to Rockport along U.S. route 75, interstate 35, U.S. routes 88 and 87 and Texas route 35. On 11 December 1977 we traveled from Rockport to Texarkana along Texas route 35, and U.S. routes 87, 59 and 259 (Fig. 1). The route includes four of the eight ornithological regions of Texas (North Central, Central Prairie, Coastal Prairie, and Wooded Eastern Quarter; Oberholser 1974) recognized by the Texas Ornithological Society. Raptors within 0.4 km (0.25 miles) were counted by a driver and passenger from an automobile traveling at from 80–88 km/hr (50–55 mph). Birds were identified to species whenever possible and their activity (perched or flying) noted. The weather was cold and partly cloudy on 8 December (Dallas recorded a low of −3°C and a high of 12°C), but was fair and mild on 9 December (Dallas recorded a low of 8°C and a high of 27°C). The temperature again dipped on 10 December and remained low through 11 December, when cloud cover increased (Dallas recorded lows of −7° and −9°C and highs of 3°C).

We identified over 98% of the 445 raptors seen to species; the remaining 8 birds were identified to genus. Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) were the most numerous raptors sighted, followed by American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*), Red-tailed Hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Black Vultures (*Coragyps atratus*), Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*), White-tailed Hawks (*B. albicaudatus*), Common Caracaras (*Caracara cheriway*), Sharp-shinned Hawks (*Accipiter striatus*), and Cooper's Hawks (*A. cooperii*; Table 2). The number of raptors seen on this survey (30.4/km) greatly exceeded the numbers seen on previous surveys (Table 1). A comparison of the frequency of the 5 most numerous species seen on our survey with their numbers in previous surveys is shown in Table 1. With the exception of Northern Harriers in the Texas panhandle and Colorado, each species was more numerous in eastern Texas than in other areas surveyed.

Because previous studies differ from ours with respect to location, habitat, and year, the reasons for differences in the number of birds seen will be discussed on a species by species basis. The lack of Turkey Vultures in the three comparable winter counts is probably due to the seasonal distribution of the birds. To a lesser degree the same is true for Red-tailed Hawks (Bystrak 1974). Similarly the lack of Black Vultures in any of the other counts is the result of overall species

[1] Present address: Department of Biology, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, SC 29733.

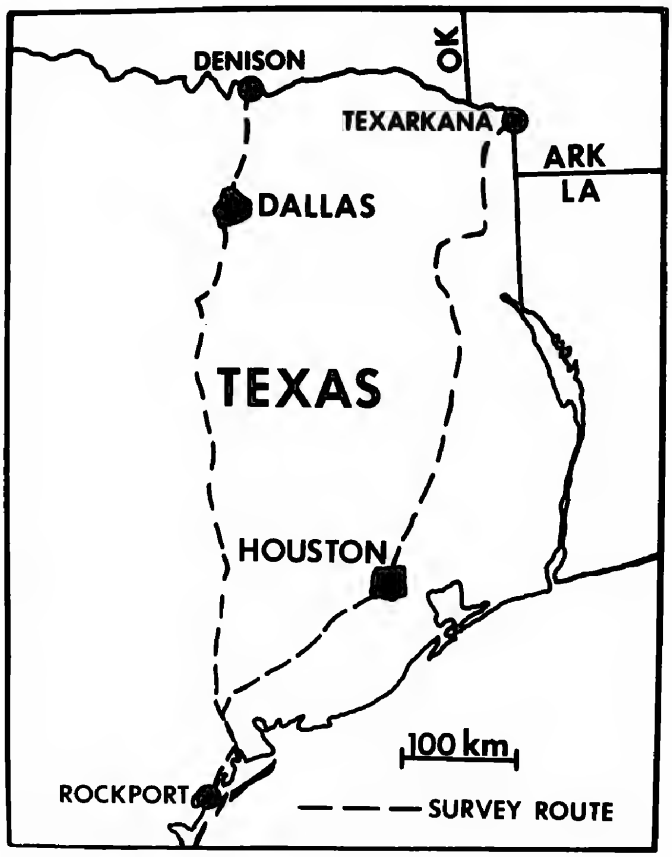

Fig. 1. Map of survey route through eastern Texas.

distribution (Brown and Amadon 1968). On the other hand, while differences in winter distribution can explain the high number of harriers in the Texas panhandle (Bystrak 1974) it cannot explain the relatively high numbers seen in Colorado (Table 1). The latter may be due to the fact that the survey route there was

Table 1. Survey of winter raptor roadside counts indicating the numbers of Turkey Vultures (TV), Black Vultures (BV), Red-tailed Hawks (RTH), Northern Harriers (NH), and American Kestrels (AK) seen.

	Number of birds per 100 km					
Location and date	TV	BV	RTH	NH	AK	All raptors
Nebraska panhandle[a] Dec 1957–59	0	0	0	0.4	0.1	2.6
Colorado[b] Sept–Feb 1962–64	0	0	0.2	2.8	1.2	15.6
Texas panhandle[c] winters 1938–39 through 1941–42	0	0	0.5	6.2	1.5	10.3
Eastern Texas[d] Dec 1977	12.8	1.0	3.9	1.0	10.3	30.4

[a] Mathisen and Mathisen 1968; [b] Enderson 1965; [c] Allan and Sime 1943; [d] This study.

Table 2. Number of raptors sighted along a 1,464-km eastern Texas survey route.

Species	Number sighted		Percent perched
	Total	Per 100 km	
Turkey Vulture	188	12.8	14
Black Vulture	14	0.96	0
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	0.07	0
Cooper's Hawk	1	0.07	0
White-tailed Hawk	2	0.14	100
Red-tailed Hawk	57	3.89	46
Red-shouldered Hawk	7	0.48	86
Unidentified *Buteo*	8	0.55	38
Northern Harrier	14	0.96	0
Common Caracara	2	0.14	50
American Kestrel	151	10.3	92
All raptors	445	30.4	

through prime harrier winter habitat of grazed fields and wheat land (Enderson 1965).

Within our own count, differences in numbers of individuals of each species seen reflect differences in habitat use as well as differences in geographic distributions of the species. For example, *Accipiter* and Red-shouldered Hawk counts are low because of these species' preference for wooded areas. Although we traveled through such areas, visibility obviously was reduced there. Other species, such as the Common Caracara and the White-tailed Hawk were seen only infrequently because both are near the northern extent of their range in coastal Texas (Brown and Amadon 1968). The low numbers of Black Vultures seen relative to Turkey Vultures is typical of these two species throughout most of their winter range in the U.S. (Bystrak 1974). The low number of Northern Harriers is somewhat enigmatic, and may be due to observer bias. Most of the raptors sighted were either perched or soaring. Harriers may have been neglected because of their low hunting flight and tendency to perch out of sight on the ground. The high numbers of both Turkey Vultures and American Kestrels probably result from the fact that both species are common winter residents throughout eastern Texas.

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GENERAL NOTES

Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor*) Breeding in North Central Texas

Steve R. Runnels

Curator of Ornithology, Dallas Museum of Natural History,
P.O. Box 26193, Dallas, Texas 75226

Peterson (1963, *A Field Guide to the Birds of Texas,* Houghton Mifflin Co., p. 18) states that the Louisiana Heron, *Hydranassa tricolor,* is resident mainly along the Texas coast, breeding locally. He cited irregular occurrences in summer as far inland as central and north Texas, but mentioned no nesting records north of Colorado County (Eagle Lake). Oberholser (1974, *The Bird Life of Texas,* Univ. Texas Press, Austin, Vol. I, p. 108–110) recorded no breeding in the north central Texas area, although a specimen was collected in Dallas County (exact date unknown). Prior to my observations, the northernmost nesting record of Louisiana Herons in Texas was in Steinhagen Reservoir, Jasper County, where three pairs nested in 1975. (Blacklock et al. 1978, *Texas Colonial Waterbird Census, 1973–1976,* Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, p. 45.)

On 6 June 1979, I observed three pairs of nesting Louisiana Herons in north central Texas (Fig. 1). Two pairs were on one island and the additional pair on an adjacent island in Cedar Creek Lake, Henderson County (coordinates 32°20′N, 96°10′W, elevation 159 m). They were observed closely from a boat, and remained relatively undisturbed. One pair of birds had three partially feathered young approximately 11 days old (McVaugh, Jr. 1972, *The Living Bird,* Eleventh Edition, Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York, p. 158–162); the other nests had 3 eggs each with an adult in attendance.

All nests were about 1.5 meters from the ground in Chinaberry trees (*Melia azedarach*). In each colony, Cattle Egrets, *Bubulcus ibis,* were the dominant species. Photographs of Louisiana Heron nests containing adults and young are on file at the Dallas Museum of Natural History.

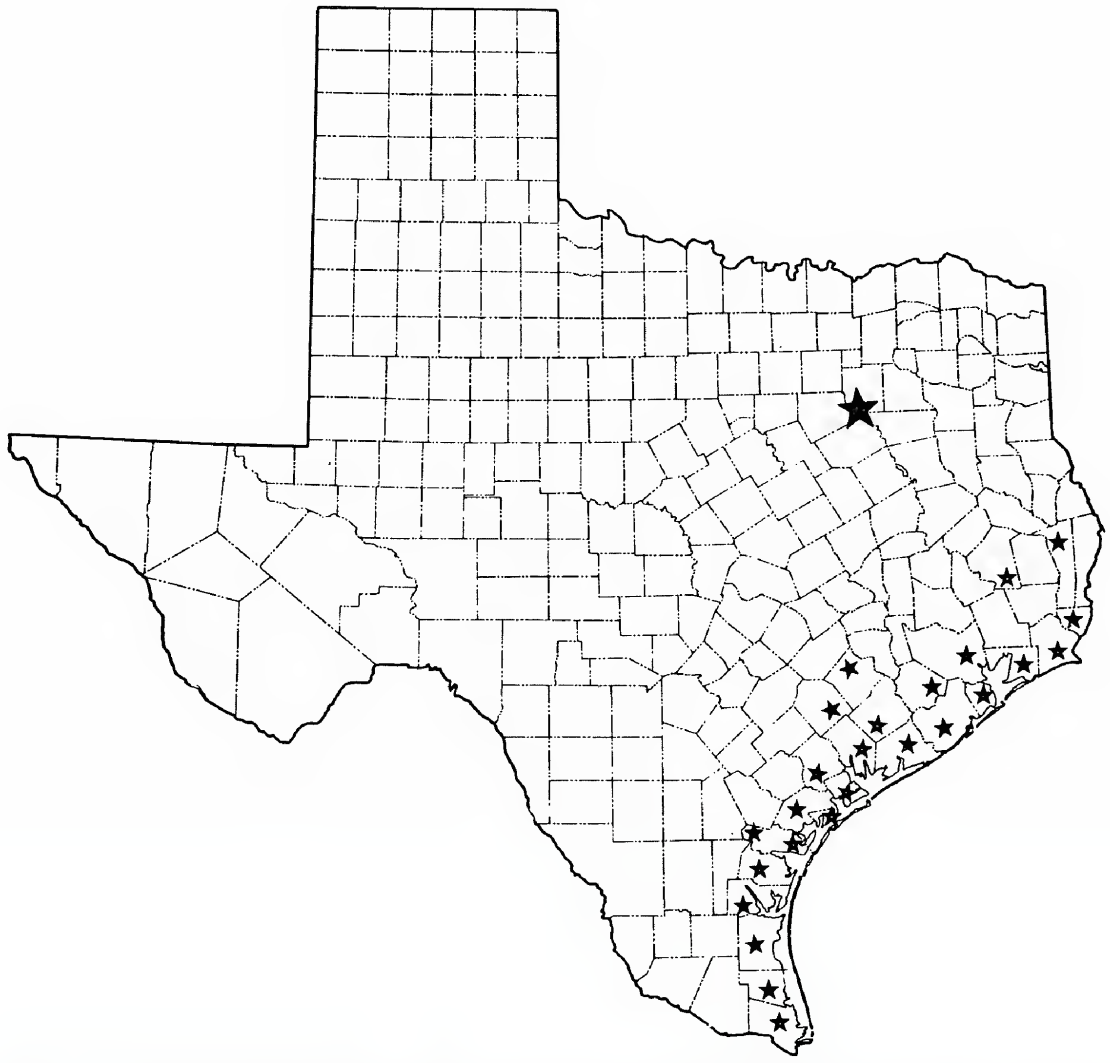

Fig. 1. Usual breeding distribution of Louisiana Herons (small stars along coast) with breeding range extension noted (large stars in Henderson County, north-central Texas).

Recent Winter Records of Forster's Terns for Lake Texoma

Charles R. Brown

2601 Turtle Creek, Sherman, Texas 75090

Sutton (1974, A Check-list of Oklahoma Birds, Stovall Mus. Sci. Hist., Univ. Okla., p. 19) lists 3 winter records of Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*) for Lake Texoma, Texas-Oklahoma; these were specimens taken on the Oklahoma side of the lake (Marshall Co.), 2 on 1 January and 1 on 5 February, 1955. Oberholser (1974, *The Bird Life of Texas,* Vol. 1, Univ. Texas Press, Austin, p. 394) noted that *S. forsteri* is "rare to casual" inland in winter in Texas, reaching Dallas, and that the species winters commonly along the Texas coast.

Forster's Terns generally appear as fall migrants on Lake Texoma in late July and are common throughout August and September, but the latest date I have for fall migration prior to 1975 is 19 October 1972. Since 1975, Forster's Terns have become fairly regular early-winter residents on Lake Texoma, a 36,000-ha (89,000 acres) impoundment on the Red River. While some of these records may be attributed to increased observer coverage of the lake in winter, I believe that observer coverage has not increased concomitantly with the increase in tern records. Presumably this reflects a recent trend toward increased early-winter use of Lake Texoma by *S. forsteri.* Here I provide a review and summary of these winter records.

1975.—At least 6 individuals remained until 2 January (1976) at the Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge, 24 km northwest of Sherman, Grayson Co., Texas. These birds were recorded on the Christmas Bird Count (CBC) (1976, Amer. Birds 30:525). The terns often were seen fishing on the Big Mineral Arm of Lake Texoma within, and north of, the refuge. About 35,000 Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) also were present at Hagerman during December. The terns closely associated with the gulls, and more than 6 individuals may have been present amid the hordes of gulls.

1976.—Ten individuals were last seen on 21 November at Hagerman Refuge. None were positively identified during December, although an unidentified tern thought possibly to be a Least Tern (*S. albifrons*) was seen at the refuge during a CBC on 20 December (1977, Amer. Birds 31:772). Even though the Forster's Terns in 1976 remained later than normal, they may be considered only late migrants, since Sutton (*op. cit.*) records migrant Forster's Terns in Oklahoma to 19 November.

1977.—Apparently many Forster's Terns were present on Lake Texoma throughout November and most of December. Five were last observed at Hagerman on 28 December. About 23 terns were present on 19 December (1978, Amer. Birds 32:776), while at least 40 had been recorded during the first week of December. Also, 3 Forster's Terns were seen at the 16,464-acre Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge, Johnston Co., Oklahoma, on the Upper Washita Arm of Lake Texoma (72 km north of Hagerman) on 30 December (1978, Amer. Birds

32:761). To my knowledge, this Tishomingo record is the first for Oklahoma in December, although Sutton has specimens on 1 January 1955.

1978.—Up to 10 individuals were present through 16 December at the Hagerman Refuge, and 3 lingered until 27 January 1979 (Williams, 1979, Amer. Birds 33:293). Refuge personnel at Tishomingo also reported Forster's Terns at that refuge several days immediately prior to 18 December, although I could not find any at Tishomingo on that date.

In hopes of determining if fluctuating water levels of Lake Texoma might be responsible for the recent records of terns, I obtained average monthly pool levels from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, Denison Dam, for 1970–1978. In 1975–1978, water levels were 1 to 1.3 m lower in November and December than for the 5 years prior to that time. This drop in lake level was brought about primarily by increased hydroelectric power generation on Lake Texoma. It is unknown if this recent decrease in lake level is responsible for the increased use of the lake by Forster's Terns in early winter, but decreased water levels have created more sandbars and exposed more submerged stumps at Hagerman and Tishomingo in recent years. Since Forster's Terns use both sandbars and stumps for perches, this added perching space may have favored their lingering. Reduced water levels also may have altered fish populations in an undetermined way, changing availability of species on which terns feed.

Rainfall and climate remained relatively unchanged from past years for the Lake Texoma area in November and December 1975–78, although colder than normal temperatures for the same years in January and February may have forced the terns south, accounting for only 1 late-winter record during that time (the 27 January 1979 birds).

Rufous-capped Warbler and White-collared Seedeater from Webb County, Texas

Keith A. Arnold

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843

For the past two years, I have been leading student field trips to Webb and Zapata counties in the central part of the Rio Grande Valley. One of these trips recently took place from 14 to 28 May 1980. During the 6 day stay at a ranch 50 km upriver from Laredo, we secured 2 specimens of the Rufous-capped Warbler (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) and a male White-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila torqueola*). The warblers represent the first specimens for the United States and the first records for Webb County, an intermediate locality between the single record for Starr County (Oberholser 1974, *The Bird Life of Texas,* Vol. 2, Univ. Texas Press, Austin) and the several records for Big Bend National Park, Brewster county (Williams 1974, Am. Birds 28:291, photographed by David A. Easterla; 1976, Am. Birds 30:94, 974; 1977, Am. Birds 31:1019; 1979, Am. Birds 33:786, photographed by Greg Lasley, Texas Photo-Record File No. 165 a–c). The seedeater is but the second record for Webb County and the first for the breeding season; 3 specimens were collected 22–24 December 1949 by George M. Sutton (Oberholser, *op. cit.*).

The 3 specimens were all netted in dense vegetation along the banks of the Rio Grande. *Baccharis,* willow-like shrubs and tall grasses dominated the vegetation. Numerous other warblers, orioles and Empidonax flycatchers occurred in this same area.

The 2 warbler specimens both showed signs of reproductive condition. The male, TCWC No. 10,887, had a well-developed cloacal proturbance and enlarged testes (left = 10 × 7 mm, right = 7 × 5 mm); the female, TCWC No. 10,888, showed a moderately developed brood patch and enlarged ovary with the largest ovum = 2 mm. Since no nest or young were discovered, the specimen records cannot be construed as evidence for breeding, but I believe the two birds were a pair.

The seedeater (TCWC No. 10,892) also showed signs of entering into reproductive condition; its testes measured 7 × 5 mm (left) and 6 × 4 mm (right). Although Oberholser (*op. cit.*) and Peterson (1959, *A Field Guide to the Birds of Texas,* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston) list this species as restricted to the Rio Grande delta, the specimens taken in Webb County and the recent sight records from San Ygnacio, Zapata County (John C. Arvin, pers. comm.) suggest that the White-collared Seedeater may have a much more extensive distribution along the Rio Grande if proper habitat exists.

I wish to thank the ten students who participated in the recent fieldwork and Mr. Desi Trevino, landowner of the Webb County property.

NOTES AND NEWS

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS

The *Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society* publishes articles and notes on original ornithological research or observations. Articles and notes dealing with Texas birds are preferred. General articles on topics of interest to *TOS* members are also welcomed.

All manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the editor. Each manuscript will be read by one or more reviewers who will provide the editor advice on the article's acceptability and accuracy.

Manuscripts, including tables, should be typewritten and double-spaced on one side of 8½ × 11 inch (21½ × 28 cm) paper. Submitted articles, notes and reviews should follow the format observed in this and subsequent issues of the *Bulletin of the Texas Ornithological Society*. Feature articles should include a "literature cited" section. Shorter articles and notes, with five cited works or less, should use parenthetical citations, e.g. (Oberholser 1974, *The Bird Life of Texas,* Univ. Texas Press, Austin).

Scientific and common names of North American birds should follow the 1957 A.O.U. Check-list and supplements. The 24-hour clock (0730), the continental dating convention (2 October 1976), and the metric system should be used.

Proofs of articles and notes will be sent to authors for review and correction. Immediate return of proofs is necessary. Reprints of articles, notes, and reviews may be ordered on forms sent with proofs.

ABOUT THE ARTIST.—The drawing of the Lichtenstein's Oriole (inside front cover) is by Larry Haines. Larry's drawing of a Belted Kingfisher was featured in November-December 1979 *TOS Bulletin.* The final version of the Lichtenstein's Oriole was produced from numerous field sketches reflecting Larry's conviction that "one must draw from life, to recreate life-like feelings." This brushed-ink portrait indeed captures the essense of this oriole, one of our most beautiful Texas birds.

Larry and his wife, Mollie, reside in San Benito. His studio is located at 119 Palo Blanco, San Benito, Texas 78586.

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R. DOUGLAS SLACK, Editor
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843

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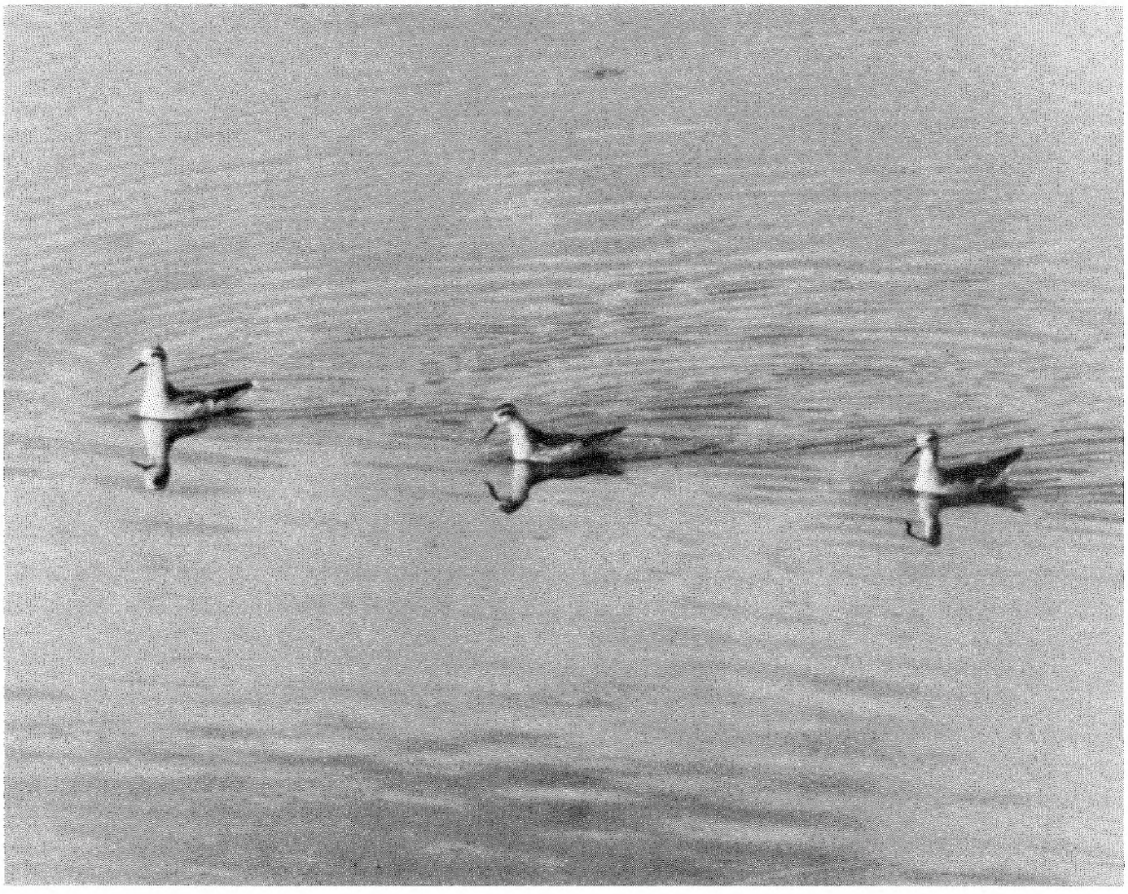

Phalaropes at Platt's Pond in Austin, Texas, September 1980. Photograph by Greg Lasley. Can you identify the species of phalaropes in this photograph?